



*Qualitas Non Quantitas*

**95<sup>th</sup> Entry  
Halton Apprentices**

## **Newsletter**

**Number 9**

**Early 2005**

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*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

So addressed, because this newsletter applies equally as much to the ladies.

Firstly, may I take this opportunity to wish everyone a very happy new year. Now to the business end of this newsletter.

As advised in the previous newsletter, we held a meeting on October 2<sup>nd</sup> to discuss the next three re-union functions/gatherings.

The first action for the meeting was to find an alternative name to “Committee” (which we is not). What we came up with is “The Planning Team” (which we is), and that’s how we now wish to be known, please.

The prime reason for calling the Planning Team meeting was the suggestion made for a special “50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Induction” re-union, to be held in Australia. Despite requesting your initial views on this idea in the last newsletter, no responses were received.

As anticipated, the meeting was animated with arguments presented against the idea, those not sure, those in favour and a whole bunch of trepidation all round. I can assure you all that the subject was discussed in great detail and all factors were considered. The degree of discussions, which spread over 4 hours, was such that it was the consensus of those attending that the meeting was very much justified.

The results of the discussions and the agreements reached are inside. Put the kettle on, make a brew, lift the phone off the hook, settle down and have a good read.

## **Next Re-Union Gathering (Stratford-on-Avon)**

At our most recent re-union function in April 2003, a show of hands showed that the majority of those present wanted a function every 5 years. This meant one in 2008 (45 years) and the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2013.

However, at the 2003 do at Thame, the seed of the Australia idea was planted and has festered, rooted, shooited and grown during the several months since and raised the query:

“If it’s going to happen, how can we fit it in?”

Thus, the idea became an agenda item at a planning meeting, called to permit in-depth discussion – in conjunction with the next reunion planned for Stratford and our 50<sup>th</sup> Graduation in 2013.

As a result of the Planning Team’s extensive deliberations, we have brought this next function forward one year (4 yrs from the last) and this is now planned for 2007 to take place in Stratford-on-Avon. Details will be forwarded in due course.

## **50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Induction (Australia)**

By bringing forward the 2008 function one year to 2007, a window opened to allow us to introduce this special event for 2010 (3 yrs after 2007).

We are aware that this venture represents a colossal undertaking and will not appeal to everyone but, believe me, all the imagined pitfalls have been examined and taken into account before being voting on.

Investigations are going-on into the possibility of a group tour to take in the whole trip, from start to finish, taking in places of interest, e.g. 1 or 2 days in Singapore? or Hong Kong?, into Perth?, Woomeragh?, Gt.Barrier Reef?; swimming with sharks crocodiles?, Alice Springs?, ‘that-there-pretty-red-stone-thing’?, etc, etc, etc, pausing for a few days for a reet grand party down Sydney way. As soon as we have some indicative news, we will let you know; but, as a concept .....

By 2010 (only 5 yrs away), everyone will be looking forward to a long and tedious retirement, in poverty, apparently, if you listen to the Government.

The ever mysterious “THEY” said we had no Entry Spirit –Well, let’s show “THEM” how wrong they are. This venture will make the helicopter event seem like a Boys Brigade excursion.

Guys & Gals – this is not something to be dismissed lightly without considerable thoughts – discuss the pros ‘n’ cons amongst yourselves; with your friends; neighbours; your children; your In-Laws; the Butcher; your Clergy; Supermarket queue; anyone who’ll listen - let your imagination run freely - but do please, engage brain and think about it.

## **50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Graduation (Perhaps York?)(Swan Song)**

Our Golden Graduation Anniversary falls in 2013 (3 yrs after 2010). The 95<sup>th</sup> Entry will celebrate this occasion in the customary fashion in a smart venue – possibly in York, where there is plentiful variety of accommodations and loads to see and do. We might even go for a mid-week event just to be different but, as the 70's (ours) will be just round the corner, it might likely be our group Swan Song

### **RAFHAAA 8<sup>TH</sup> Triennial Reunion** (Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2004)

As usual, Bill Thornley and myself made the journey and arrived at around 10.15 ish, Thanks to modern technology, the mobile phone, we soon joined up with Roger Miller, who was attending for the first time. Within a short time we met with Robbie Johnson & Glynn Bolderson whilst keeping an eye out for Johnnie Cormack, also a first-timer. We were unsure whether he would actually make it, being ill earlier in the week but he did – and his thoughts on the experience follows, with Roger's review after that.

At the Church Service, where the windows of the 21<sup>st</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup> Entries were dedicated, the Padre introduced by name a member of the 11<sup>th</sup> Entry – at 95 years old (good number, that), and a few from 21/29 who were younger, obviously, but still in their early 90's/late 80's (that tenacity of spirit is one reason why I personally enjoy attending the Triennials). The windows of the West Wall of the St. Georges Church are now all but full with only about 15 spaces remaining vacant. It represents a wonderful display of colour, pride and history.

During the day we presented an Entry Badge Shield to Francis Hanford, the Curator of "The Trenchard Museum" (Henderson/Grove Gym on the edge of the square), to join other Entry badges on display. One more piece of evidence marking our time at Halton. Check it out next time you visit. I subsequently received a very nice letter of thanks from Francis, which is reproduced elsewhere in this newsletter.

On a note of gloom – Roger heard from a colleague that our Mike Thatcher may have possibly passed on. Although unconfirmed, his name will be added to the Obituary list and he will be remembered.

### **Halton Revisited.** (My thoughts of a day out. By Johnny Cormack)

I would just like to write a few thoughts about the Halton AA Reunion, which I attended for the first time on 25<sup>th</sup> September. I was in two minds about going on this occasion; because of other commitments I would have to drive from Preston first thing in the morning and return the same night. Anyway, I decided to go for it and set the alarm for 04:30.

I duly arrived at Halton about 10:45 and was surprised at the number of cars that were already parked on the sports field. I then had a leisurely stroll down to the Airfield to be met by the HAAA welcoming committee and to explain that I hadn't got a ticket. I was struck by the friendliness and helpfulness of everyone, even ex brats of the 51<sup>st</sup> and 84<sup>th</sup> entries deemed to speak to me and promptly issued me a ticket (entrance, not parking!).

It was a real pleasure to meet our entry guys again at the meet and greet, who seemed almost pleased to see me! The day just flew past, there was much to see and I even enjoyed the church service. The Padre said some very interesting things about the meaning of apprentice (to bind and to learn), which for our particular time at Halton, seemed very true. I think most of us feel that there is a special invisible bond which holds us together and that we will never stop being inquisitive and wanting to learn, all of our lives.

The next Phase was the marching up the hill behind the pipe band which was quite nostalgic, Bill Thornley kindly reminded me that he remembered me striding out like mad, side pack bouncing with every step, trying to keep up with the taller members, for our three years here. This time I was trying to keep up with the young 90 year olds at the front, marching up the hill like spring chickens.

In all it was a splendid day even though the weather could have been a little kinder. We all hope that more of us can make it next time (2007), complete with a 95<sup>th</sup> banner if someone is artistic enough to make one, some of the others on show were quite novel. My wife Steph often tells me that I am a bit of an artist, but unfortunately not that type of artist!

I'm really pleased that I allowed myself to be persuaded to attend. See you all in the near future I hope.

Johnny Cormack  
September 2004

### **Halton Triennial Reunion** (My first – Dusty Miller)

I had visited Halton on duty on several occasions since we all passed out. I was always saddened by the rundown of the Apprentice programme. Whenever the subject of the Triennial came up I always seemed to consider it as “something I ought to do” rather than “something I wanted to do”. So the two thoughts combined into a lack of commitment and I never did anything about it.

Alf suggested (over a number of years) that I ought to give it a shot, and after all, it is only 24 miles from my home. So this year I joined the association and attended the Triennial.

Not knowing what to expect, I was surprised by the number of people involved in the organisation right from the start. Having dumped the car in the massive car park, I was in touch with Alf (dressed like our man in Panama) by mobile within seconds and found that he had also just arrived. Alf, Bill Thornley and I made our way down to the airfield. There was a lot going on with memorabilia on sale, a continuously running flying model display, the pipe band and display of ancient cars (most of which I remember how to service.) The weather was unfortunately cold and wet and the model flyers had real problems close to the ground because of the gusts. At least one outstanding display of jet engine power ended with a crash on landing. We moved on to see some of the displays of hardware and to the meet and greet area and in a flash it was time for lunch. For those numbers the “fork supper” sort of lunch on offer was better than I expected and having organised many points at which you could “refuel” queues were at a minimum. With meeting further acquaintances at lunchtime again passed swiftly before we moved off to the schools area. Not being that impressed by the clergy for the most part, I nearly did not bother with the church service. I am damn glad I did go in. The clergy involved did an outstanding job. The Padre was particularly enthusiastic about his experience of ex-apprentices and of the time he had spent at Halton. If you needed someone to give you a pep talk before a job interview then this guy was just the ticket. He even lifted my spirits (despite myself) and that was a surprise.

After the service we all formed up for the march up the hill. With drill instructors pretending to give us mouth to ear resuscitation we all shambled off up the hill following the distant band. It was a bit disconcerting to find an ambulance following so close behind us with the driver's beady eye giving a remarkable impression of a vulture in waiting. It was amusing to see the shambles sort itself out and everyone fall into step as we crossed the kerb onto the

parade ground. Almost as if the lads bravado faded before the spectre of SWOs past still keeping a watchful eye.

Would I go again? Yes I certainly would and would be really pleased to meet any or all of you there. (I have posted a couple of photos at the end of the news letter.)

Dusty - 2004

## **RAFHAAA**

Triennial Halton Apprentice re-unions occur every three years (I'll bet you didn't know that!).

Full details of joining the RAFHAAA can be obtained from:

The Secretary, RAFHAAA, RAF Halton, Aylesbury, Bucks. HP22 5PG

## **50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Induction (Australia)**

Now that the initial shock / horror / euphoria / distress / astonishment / gast-flaberry / exhilaration / outrage (choose your own) has had a few moments to subside, make another cup of tea & drink it. Have another; have a scotch / gin / vodka / whatever, sleep on it and then give the brain some uninterrupted thinking time.

Go back to page 2 and re-read the text. Realise that the event is 5 years away (or, only 5 years away, dependant on your point of view), which gives at least 4 full years to save up for it.

Sure, it'll cost a bomb, but is it worthwhile? Only you can answer that! I'm sure you will all come to the right decision for yourselves.

But! Before you decide finally, wait until we come up with some indicative facts and figures.

It would obviously help in the planning processes (tour and Australia elements – Tony Dapre has offered to organise the event) if you would kindly let the Planning Team have an indication of your individual interest - or not. Please respond either electronically or snail mail. To this end there is a preliminary return slip enclosed.

From: Francis Hanford



A Training Group Defence Agency  
Station

## The Trenchard Museum Royal Air Force Halton Aylesbury, Bucks HP22 5PG

Telephone: Aylesbury (01296) 623535  
RAFTN (Service users) 95237  
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A Banyard Esquire  
105 Stone Hill Drive  
Sunny Bower  
Blackburn  
BB1 5TS

Our Ref: MUS/02/CUR

Your Ref:

Date: 28 October 2004

*Dear Alf,*

As the official Entry Representative may we thank you very much indeed for the 95<sup>th</sup> Entry Plaque, which was presented to me at the Triennial by 2 of your members whose names I omitted to record. I did enjoy talking to them, as I did to a vast number of our visitors. It is on display already with the other entry plaques above the workshops area of the museum.

From the museum's point of view the Triennial was a great success. We estimate that we had some 700 visitors and all appeared to enjoy themselves. This gives us the encouragement we need to develop further and we hope to extend our engineering displays in particular. Our aim is to remind you of, and to explain to our non-ex-apprentice visitors, the methods by which the work and test pieces were produced. Also we hope to accumulate more working demonstration exhibits to increase the "workshops" atmosphere.

I am sorry that this letter has been so long in coming but the generosity of our recent visitors has been overwhelming. We hope that it finds you well and that we will see you again before too long.

*Yours sincerely*

*Francis*

Left to Right  
Dusty, Johnny, Alf, Bill.





The presentation of the  
95<sup>th</sup> Entry Plaque

The band on the march up  
from the Airfield.



**In Memoriam:**

Friends who have passed on. In our thoughts and prayers.

Michael McColl Young

Roland Bath

Keith Burdass

Clive Wilson

Rod Pritchard

Jerry Padgen

Colin Pollard

Bob Jupp

**Mike Thatcher ?**

*On behalf of the Planning Team,*

*Qualitas non Quantitas*

*Alf Banyard*

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**95<sup>th</sup> Entry - 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Induction –Australia 2010**

Name/s .....

We are provisionally interested / not interested in joining the Tour for a Re-Union Function in Australia during 2010.

Please keep us informed of developments.